

**March 8, 2021**

**Testimony in SUPPORT of:**

**Bill # 1017: An Act Concerning Election Administration.**

**Bill # 6578: An Act Concerning Participation in Electoral Process**

Dear GAE Committee Co-Chairs Sen. Flexer and Rep. Fox, Vice Chairs Sen. Haskell and Rep. Thomas, and Ranking Members Sen. Sampson and Rep. Mastrofrancesco and Members of the GAE Committee,

Thank you for all you did this year to protect our right to vote. It is clear from the record high participation rate that absentee voting for all and the other steps taken to make voting convenient and safe were very important to voters in Connecticut. Nearly 35% of the population chose to vote by Absentee Ballot while those who wanted to vote in person were still able to do so.

Please continue to make voting easy, convenient and accessible for ALL CT voters by voting YES in SUPPORT of bill number 1017: An Act Concerning Election Administration to make the absentee ballot drop boxes permanent and enable voters to request absentee ballots via an online application and in SUPPORT of bill number 6578: An Act Concerning Participation in Electoral Process for automatic voter registration at the DMV and to restore voting rights to parolees.

The drop boxes made this experience even more convenient. I personally used the drop box, as did many of my friends and family. Not only was it more reliable than dropping it in the mail, but it gave me confidence to know that my ballot would be received for sure the very next business day. Finally, we already have the boxes, so to not use them is simply foolish.

With regard to being able to complete an application for an absentee ballot online, I volunteered with a number of other states for the elections and saw firsthand how voters in many states were able to easily, safely and conveniently request an absentee ballot online, rather than having to print it out and mail it in or drop it off in person. I would like these options to be available for all future elections.

I also learned that many states have automatic voter registration where eligible voters are automatically registered to vote at DMV and other government organizations. Our goal should be to get as many eligible voters as possible registered so that they can fully participate in our democracy and exercise their civic duty of voting.

Finally, parolees have served their time and should have their voting rights restored.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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